

MINUTES MARINUS LINK GIPPSLAND STAKEHOLDER LIAISON GROUP

Date: 27 May 2025

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams and in person in MLPL office

Meeting #15

Chair: Marinus Link

Member Attendees

Elise Erwin (EE), RDV	Nick Dudley (ND), GLaWAC
Luke Arber (LA), DEWR	Ian Gibson (IG), Fed Uni
Shannon Egan (SE), TAFE Gippsland	Tony Flynn (TF), Forest Works
Maddie Fraser (MFr) - South Gippsland SC	Ken Fraser (KF), South Gippsland SC
Peter Mooney (PM), ETU	Tony Cantwell (TC), C4G

Marinus Link Attendees

Uncle Lloyd Hood (ULH)	Mark Lindsay (ML)
Holly Williamson (HW)	Stephanie McGregor (SMG)
Rochelle Reinhardt (RR)	Robert Stockdale (RS)

Hitachi Attendees

Derrick Nofal (DF)	Bernard Norton (BN)
Isabel Wagner (IW)	

Apologies

Martin Fuller (MFu) – WGCMA	Glen McColl (GMc), Latrobe CC
Graham Ross (GR), SGLCN	

Minutes

Introduction (ML)

- ML opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and thanking them for their time and ongoing support of the project.
- Attendees provided an introduction and their connection / interest in Marinus Link.
- An Acknowledgment was given to recognise and respect the Traditional Owners of the lands across which Marinus Link will operate, and to pay respect to Elders past and present.

CEO Update (SMG)

- SMG introduced the current CEO transition from Interim CEO, Dr Collette Burke, to herself as CEO from Monday 1 June.
- SMG brings extensive experience from the energy transmission industry, beginning in high-voltage subsea cable (HVSC) work in 2008.
- SMG has personal and professional ties to the Gippsland region.
- MLPL is approaching the critical milestone of preparing a Final Investment Decision (FID) recommendation to the Board. If endorsed, this recommendation will be considered by shareholders (Commonwealth and State Governments) to reach a positive FID.
- SMG noted the high level of constructive engagement from a broad range of stakeholders as the project progresses through planning and approvals.
- Marinus Link has signed a five-year agreement with Jacobs as its Integrated Delivery Partner. This partnership represents a significant step forward in increasing project resources and maintaining a strong focus on delivery and execution requirements.
- SMG places emphasis on the importance of a "One Marinus Link Team" approach, where all partners and internal teams are aligned to deliver the project efficiently and collaboratively.
- The project is entering a staged ramp-up toward construction. Early works are expected to begin in late 2025, with major construction activity planned to commence in 2026.

Environment approvals

- The Victorian Planning Minister has issued recommendations from the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process.
- The MLPL team is reviewing these to understand their impact on project execution and other necessary approvals.
- The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) approval is still pending and actively monitored.
- The Tasmanian environmental process is ongoing.

Australian Energy Regulator (AER) draft decision

- A draft decision was issued two weeks prior to the meeting, assessing Marinus Link's submitted cost estimates for the construction phase.
- A substantial portion of the project costs has been accepted.

- Some components received feedback, indicating areas where further work is needed ahead of the AER's final determination expected at the end of the year.
- MLPL will circulate further detail regarding the draft decision after the meeting.

Question: What are some examples of feedback received from AER? (IG)

Response: MLPL noted that the specific feedback received from the AER, including areas of partial agreement, will be shared with attendees following the meeting.

Question: Could they add additional items onto the project prior to the AER's final decision? (PM)

Response: ML clarified that MLPL holds a transmission licence that outlines expected standards of conduct. This licence also defines the financial scope within which the project must be delivered, regardless of the AER's determinations.

Question: Does AER decision impact FID? (PM)

Response: No. The AER process runs in parallel to the Final Investment Decision. Once the Board provides a positive FID recommendation, the project can progress to financial close.

Question: What if shareholders do not agree on FID? (IG)

Response: SMG stated that while the aim is for all shareholders to align, appropriate processes are in place to navigate differing outcomes should they arise.

Question: What is the Shareholder structure? (PM)

Response: HW and ML provided the current shareholder breakdown:

- 49% Commonwealth
- 17.7% Tasmania
- 33.3% Victoria

Question: Late in 2024 MLPL provided the AER with proposed construction of \$3.86 billion. What's this cost now? (ND)

Response: SMG confirmed that Marinus Link submitted a cost estimate of \$3.86 billion to the AER in Late 2024. The final number is still being developed and will reflect updated market conditions and scope refinements.

Question: Has the project decided on the valuation for the community benefits value? (ND)

Response: ML explained that a financial provision for community benefits will be included in the FID. Marinus Link is awaiting further policy guidance from VicGrid on how the Victorian Transmission Investment Fund will operate. Within Victoria, a pooled fund model is expected, though the project must also consider Tasmania's needs and manage expectations accordingly.

Question: Does the Ministers EES approval include both stages? (IG)

Response: ML confirmed that the environmental approvals currently in place cover both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the project.

- HVDC is used to convert alternating current (AC) from the Tasmanian 220kV grid into direct current (DC), enabling long-distance transmission via undersea and underground cables. This is then converted back to AC to connect to Victoria's 500kV grid. Marinus link is a two-way interconnector, which enables power to be received and sent by both Victoria and Tasmania.
- The key benefits of high voltage direct current (HVDC) over high voltage alternating current (HVAC) were explained:
 - Efficiency: HVDC has lower energy losses over long distances.
 - Reduced land use: Requires only two conductors (positive and negative) compared to three in AC, reducing easement width.
 - Greater capacity: More power can be transmitted through the same cable cross-section.
 - Versatility: HVDC can operate across submarine, underground and overhead configurations.
- DN demonstrated a global map of HVDC projects to illustrate both the maturity and global uptake of HVDC technology and Hitachi's role in completed or in-progress projects worldwide.
- Attendees were shown preliminary visuals of the Hazelwood Converter Station, developed from Hitachi's Building Information Modelling (BIM):
 - Detailed 3D models enable in-depth planning, including equipment layout and clash detection during construction.
 - Components shown included AC switchyards, transformers (including a spare), converter buildings, valve halls, DC halls, cooling systems, backup generators, service and telecommunications buildings.
- The inner workings of valve halls were explained:
 - These house the core equipment that converts AC to DC using advanced electronic components.
 - Cooling systems (similar to closed-loop radiators) are essential due to the high power and switching frequency.
- DN highlighted that Hazelwood and Heybridge's control centre will house SCADA systems to manage both ends of the link and interact with the energy regulator.

Question: Really interested to hear what sort of qualifications/skills are required for those working on the converter stations? (SE)

Response: DN explained that highly specialised commissioning engineers will oversee key phases, particularly testing and operating the HVDC valves. Electricians, electrical fitters and engineers will also play a role. BN clarified there is coordination between Hitachi (design and commissioning) and the Balance of Works contractor (on-ground construction).

Question: In the slide showing global HVDC projects, what does the black vs grey represent? (ND)

Response: DN confirmed that black denotes projects delivered or underway by Hitachi, while grey indicates projects by other global HVDC vendors.

Question: Does Hitachi plan to use its Australian manufacturing facilities for this project? (PM)

Response: BN confirmed that Hitachi has a manufacturing facility in Lilydale (Vic), and that the company is looking into how to best utilise local capabilities for Marinus Link.

Works Package Update (ML)

- MLPL is nearing completion of a 20-week interactive tender process for the Balance of Works package.
- Two shortlisted proponents—Empower and TasVic Greenlink—have participated in multiple engagement sessions and stakeholder meetings.
- MLPL hosted three well-attended meet the proponents’ sessions held in Gippsland and NW Tasmania, with over 600 people attending.
- Scope of works includes for the balance of work contract includes the construction of two converter stations (Hazelwood and Heybridge), trenching and installation of approximately 90km of underground cable infrastructure and preparing the site for the future joining of Prysmian’s HVDC cable.
- Final costings from tenderers expected by mid-June 2025 (King’s Birthday weekend).
- Contract award and public announcement expected in late 2025.
- Contractor will need to be appointed well in advance to commence early works by late 2025, with construction ramping up in 2026.

Landholder Update (ML)

- The landholder team is actively progressing easement lease option deeds along the project alignment.
- 81% of landholders have received draft agreements and of those, 26% have been formally executed.
- Engagement is ongoing with Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP), which covers 17km of the 90km alignment.
- Some landholders are awaiting confirmation of project certainty—especially following the recent Victorian Minister’s approval of the EES.
- Others are represented by legal or third-party advisors, which adds time to negotiations.
- Ongoing survey, environmental, and cultural heritage work is supporting route validation.
- Recently, MLPL has released a landholder animation, which has been shared amongst the group which depicts the proposed construction methodology on private land.

Question: Is compulsory acquisition being considered if voluntary agreements can’t be reached? (TF)

Response: Yes. While the goal is to achieve voluntary easement agreements with all landholders, the project is prepared to progress through compulsory acquisition where necessary. This would involve formal processes and legal registration of easements on land titles.

Grants and Sponsorships (HW)

- The Community Grants and Sponsorship Program launched in late 2024 and has so far supported 31 successful applicants across NW Tasmania and Gippsland.
- The program offers:
 - Up to \$2,500 for sponsorships (e.g. events, clubs).
 - Up to \$5,000 for community grants (e.g. infrastructure, facility improvements).
- Grants and Sponsorship program will continue until funds are exhausted (expected end FY25).

- A broader Community Benefit Sharing Program will replace it during the construction phase, guided by government policy and VicGrid.

Engagement Update (HW)

- Engagement activity has expanded significantly, with focus on key stakeholder groups and public awareness campaigns.
- Participation in Jobs Expos across the region (e.g. Sale, Lucknow and Lardner Park)
- MLPL executive team attended the Tasmanian Joint Select Committee.
- Regular stakeholder route drives for Marinus Link board members, executives, and shareholders. Thank you to all our GSLG members who have participated in these route drives.

First Peoples engagement:

- A recent Yarning Circle at the MLPL Mardan property brought together three TOs; GunaiKurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, and the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council.
- Discussions included employment, cultural connection, and future engagement.
- Marinus Link is preparing to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- Tender processes include First Peoples employment and procurement targets, which are being evaluated as part of the Balance of Works tender.

Question: How is Marinus ensuring Aboriginal people are included in job opportunities? (LA)

Response: First Peoples participation is a core priority. Through the tender process and industry participation plan, contractors are being assessed on their commitments to training and employment.

Meeting closed 11:00am

Actions	Who
Distribute the minutes and presentation slides.	HW
Send GSLG members a link to Landholder animation video	HW
Share information about AER's decision	ML
Next meeting – Tuesday 26 August	ALL